

Helping Seniors Help themselves to Good Nutrition

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What is hunger and malnutrition?

- Hunger is the uneasy or painful sensation caused by a lack of food; the recurrent and involuntary lack of access to food that may produce malnutrition over time.
- Malnutrition is a failure to achieve nutrient requirements, which can impair physical and/or mental health. It may result from consuming too little (*or too much*)* food or a shortage or imbalance of key nutrients.

American Dietetics Association, 2002

** Missing part of definition*

Hunger and malnutrition hierarchy

Starvation
Hunger: persistent
Hunger: intermittent
Malnutrition: vits/mins
Well fed: healthy
Overnutrition: obesity

Food security is...

“When all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to food to meet their dietary needs for a productive and healthy life.”

US Government

Community Food Security is...

“All persons in a community having access to culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate food through local non-emergency sources at all times.”

Community Food Security Coalition

Charity vs food security approach

- Hand-up vs handout
- Comprehensive vs singular focus
- Long term vs short term effects
- Community vs institutional response
- Local vs global food system approach

"If I give food to the poor they call me a saint. If I ask why the poor have no food, they call me a communist."

Hélder Câmara, (Brazil, 1964)

Senior poverty

- Reduction in elderly poverty is one of the largest accomplishments of Lyndon Johnson's Great Society programs (by increasing SS benefits)
- In 1966, almost 30 percent of senior citizens lived in poverty. It is down to 8 percent
- Income inequality and total percent in poverty higher in the United States than in most other industrialized nations
- Poverty rate among the aged is slightly below that of the population as a whole

Politics of senior poverty alleviation

- Part of “deserving poor” (mostly white, non-able bodied, socio-economic contributors)
- Active voters (higher than any other age group) and good lobby (AARP)
- “Its our money!” (though most get more than they contributed)

Programs to increase senior food security

- Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP)
- Food gardening
- Gleaning

What is the SFMNP?

The Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) awards grants to States, United States Territories, and federally-recognized Indian tribal governments to provide low-income seniors with coupons that can be exchanged for eligible foods at farmers' markets, roadside stands, and community supported agriculture programs.

What is the purpose of the SFMNP?

The purposes SFMNP are:

- Provide fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables to low income seniors to improve nutritional status
- Support local family farmers
- Expand farmers markets, roadside stands, and community supported agriculture

Who is eligible for SFMNP benefits?

- Low-income seniors who are at least 60 years old and have household incomes of not more than 185% of the federal poverty income guidelines
- Some State agencies accept proof of participation or enrollment in another means-tested program, such as the Commodity Supplemental Food Program or Food Stamps

Washington State SFMNP Funding

\$123,720 USDA + \$176,695 Vitamin funds for a total of \$300,415 for produce.

Counties: Clallam, Jefferson, Pacific, Grays Harbor (\$30,000); Kitsap (\$15,000); Pierce (\$22,500); King (\$75,000); Snohomish (\$20,000); Skagit, Whatcom, Island, San Juan (\$35,000); Spokane, Whitman (\$35,800); Chelan, Grant, Okanogan (\$20,240); Thurston (\$21,875); Yakima, Asotin, Benton, Columbia, Franklin, Garfield, Kittitas, Walla Walla (\$15,000); Clark (\$10,000)

SFMNP Service delivery

- Local produce is purchased directly from farmers and delivered to congregate meal sites, food banks, and low-income senior housing buildings for pick-up by eligible seniors
- Local produce is purchased directly from farmers and delivered through the existing home-delivered meal programs to frail, homebound seniors
- Seniors redeem vouchers for produce directly from farmers' markets or roadside stands.

SFMNP results

2002: 7475 Seniors, 10 Markets, 208 Farmers (49 direct; 126 market; 19 CSA; 14 roadside stands)

UW Nutrition Sciences Department found that:

- Only 22% of participants reported eating five or more servings per day - increased to 39%.
- Daily consumption of fruits and vegetables increased by 1.04 servings per day. Control group: intake decreased by 0.27 servings per day
- 94% reported that they would like to participate in the future

Gardening

- Many seniors love to garden, especially immigrants and African-Americans
- Bucket gardening project
- Kitchen Garden Project – Golden Hemlock Garden (76 senior gardens)
- Community gardens – Salishan Family Garden
- Master Gardeners are mostly seniors

Gleaning

- Started Gleaning Project in 1990
- Mostly run by volunteer seniors who go into fields, stores, salmon hatcheries, and bread factories to glean excess food
- Food is kept by volunteers, but the vast majority is donated to local food banks
- Now run by Tahoma Food System

Gleaning Project Results

- WSU research showed that 93% preserved food for later use
- Over 3 million pounds donated since 1991. Now over 500,000 per year
- 80% went to food banks
- Senior centers receive gleaned food

Bottom line:

**Seniors can contribute to their own
and their community's food security
through volunteerism and self-
sufficiency programs**